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race relations  
(Thompson)

ADVENTURE  
IN

# BUILDING BROTHERHOOD



Methodist Women and Race





Adventure  
in  
Building Brotherhood  
*(Methodist Women and Race)*

*By*

Betty Jane Thompson

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# Adventure

in

## *Building Brotherhood*



THIS IS A STORY of Methodist women and their activities, through their missionary societies, in the area of race relations. There was a time when such a story would be about work with and for Negroes exclusively. But this is no longer true. It was not too long ago that Methodist women enlarged the boundaries described by these words *race relations*. Today Methodist women,

when they use the term *race relations*, may be referring to their work with and for peoples in any one of a number of racial, cultural, or national minority groups.

Because they used the term *race relations* in reference to the Negro only does not mean that Methodist women did nothing for or with other minority groups. In fact, the effort to meet the needs of a racial group other than the

Negro launched not only the interracial program of organized Methodist women but also a home missionary society, the work of which was inherited by, and still is, a vital part of the program of the Woman's Division of Christian Service.

## Story Still Unfinished

This is a story which has been in the process of being written for more than seventy-five years. The last instalment cannot be published yet, for Methodist women have not completed their work in this area of human relations. The increased and intensified program being undertaken by the Woman's Division of Christian Service today indicates that there are many chapters to be written before the final period will be recorded.

Many Protestant groups this year will be studying the theme "The Christian and Race." The basic study book for adults, *Portrait of a Pilgrim—A Search for the Christian Way in Race Relations*, has been written by Dr. Buell G. Gallagher, President of Talladega (Alabama) College. ADVENTURE IN BUILDING BROTHERHOOD has been written to supplement this basic text.<sup>1</sup>

## Color and Drama Mark Adventure

The adventure of Methodist women in building brotherhood makes a story filled with color and drama.

Methodist women have heard parts of this story as they have sat in meetings or listened to tales from the past. This pamphlet is an attempt to give as complete a picture as possible of the work that has been done in the past and is now being carried on by Methodist women to build bonds of friendship and understanding among peoples of all races.

This story cannot pretend to be the complete history of the interracial program of Methodist women from the beginning to the present time. It will take a long period of research and interviewing to fill in the gaps that have been found.

## Account Based on Records

ADVENTURE IN BUILDING BROTHERHOOD is really only the beginning of the account of what Methodist women have done in

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<sup>1</sup>See also pamphlet, *Methodist Women Along the Mexican Border*. (Order from Literature Headquarters, 420 Plum Street, Cincinnati 2, Ohio.) Price, 20 cents.




race relations. It is based upon the minutes and annual reports and the publications of the home missionary societies of the Methodist Episcopal Church and of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South—the Woman's Home Missionary Society (M. E.) and the Woman's Parsonage and Home Mission Society, the Woman's Home Mission Society, and the Woman's Missionary Council (M. E., South)—and the Woman's Division of Christian Service.

Essentially this is a story of white people and their dreams

and desires for brotherhood. White people are not the only ones who have dreamed of brotherhood, who have worked to make brotherhood a reality. The stories of leaders of interracial programs of the minority groups need to be added. Essentially this is a story of action. There is an equally thrilling story of the promotion of brotherhood through the printed word. These are stories that must be told before the completed story of Methodist women and the program for building brotherhood is fully known.



## Methodist Women Respond to a Need



It was in another era of "moving populations" and postwar reconstruction and rehabilitation that organized Methodist women began their work among peoples whose physical characteristics and customs were different from those

of the majority of the citizens of the United States.

The year was 1870. Methodist women on the Pacific Coast suddenly realized that it was not infrequently that they met a Chinese woman on the street.

The records of this early interest are incomplete. But it might not be too wrong to guess that the woman, whose concern had been aroused, made a survey to see just what the situation was, for in her *Twenty Years' History* Mrs. T. L. Tomkinson reports that the women discovered that there were nearly 6,000 Chinese women on the Pacific Coast, 3,000 in San Francisco alone.<sup>1</sup>

More than half these 6,000 Chinese women were believed to be slave-girls, all came from a country with a non-Christian background.

## Discovery Demands Action

Here, then, was a situation charged with an emotional appeal which gripped the sympathy and the imagination of Methodist women. Here was a chance to rescue girls from a life of hardship and from unwholesome surroundings. Here was a chance to win souls for Christ.

There was no question in the minds of Methodist women. The

situation demanded action and they did something about it. They called a meeting for women in August, 1870. It was at this meeting that the Woman's Missionary Society of the Pacific Coast was organized as an auxiliary to the General Missionary Society of the church.

The women took over the third floor and part of the second floor of the new Chinese Mission Home, which had been built that year by the general society. A day school was opened for women and girls and the third floor was made into a dormitory. This was the first Rescue Home. To this home Chinese men, Christian and non-Christian, brought their wives; to it came women and girls seeking to escape from unpleasant surroundings; to it the police brought those who came into their jurisdiction.

## Membership Request Denied

Seeking to become a part of the larger Methodist woman movement, members of the Pacific society asked that they be allowed to unite with the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society which

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<sup>1</sup>Mrs. T. L. Tomkinson, *Twenty Years' History* (Cincinnati: The Woman's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1903), p. 202.

had been organized in 1869. But the foreign missionary society replied that such a move was barred by the constitutional clause specifying that the society's work be confined to fields abroad.

While women on the Pacific Coast were organizing their work among the Chinese, another event—one that was to play a large part in the shaping of one of the major interracial programs of Methodist women—was taking place in another section of the country. It was in the year 1870 that Dr. (bishop in Africa from 1897 to 1916) and Mrs. Joseph C. Hartzell arrived in New Orleans, where Dr. Hartzell took over his duties as minister of Ames Chapel.

The days of reconstruction after the Civil War did not deal kindly with Southerners in the low economic brackets. Facing peculiar and new problems were the Negroes. These peoples, "uprooted" from their customary way of life, facing the problems created by their freedom, claimed Mrs. Hartzell's sympathy. Pushing aside criticism, she went among them, helping them to make the readjustments that their new status demanded.

### "Courageous"

"It must have taken a lot of courage for you to nominate me," Mrs. E. C. Clement, American Mother for 1946, told her Methodist friend, a member of the United Council of Church Women staff, who suggested Mrs. Clement's name when the Golden Rule Foundation met to elect the American Mother for the year. First Negro to receive this honor, Mrs. Clement is the widow of a bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Zion.

## Support Counteracts Discouragement

She, too, appealed to the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, but her request met with the same answer as had that of the Pacific Coast society. Then she turned to the Freedmen's Aid Society, a Methodist organization. Just when it seemed that her request would be granted, the society discovered that allowing women to become board members would endanger its right to hold property. Thus the way to gaining the backing of an established organization was blocked once more.

But she did not let discouragement keep her from aiding the people who needed friendship and help. The growing interest

of others, too, added to her determination to assist the bewildered people around her. With others willing to aid her, Mrs. Hartzell planned an enlarged program. House-to-house visitation, helping with the sick, showing people how to keep house had been her major emphases. Now she opened small day schools to provide an education for those who needed it badly. The first school of this type opened in Wesley Chapel in 1877 with three teachers. Mrs. Hartzell personally became responsible for the salaries of the missionaries and for the equipment for the schools. By 1879 she was directing the activities of nine white missionaries and five Negro missionaries. Among the white workers was Miss Josephine Cowgill who became the first missionary of the Woman's Home Missionary Society when it was organized.

## Conference Fails to Hear Plea

There came the time when Mrs. Hartzell realized that she no longer could carry on the program alone. It was beyond her physical strength. Too, the demand for the schools was so great.

Confidently she turned to the General Conference which met in May, 1880, in Cincinnati. But she was not even heard at this meeting. The agenda was "too crowded" to permit her time to present her proposal. Her sense of discouragement was great. But this moment, in which she felt that her whole program would have to be abandoned, proved to be the beginning of a dynamic and still growing venture on the part of Methodist women with vision and concern for others.

For it was because she failed to get a hearing at General Conference that the Woman's Home Missionary Society was organized.

## Ministers Arrange Meeting

And this is the way it happened. Dr. A. B. Leonard, then district superintendent, and Dr. J. N. Irwin, minister of Cincinnati's Trinity Church, arranged a woman's meeting so that Mrs. Hartzell could present her program and the need for financial assistance. The meeting, presided over by Mrs. R. S. Rust, wife of the corresponding secretary of the Freedmen's Aid Society and a friend of Mrs. Hartzell, was held in Trinity Church on June 8, 1880.

Mrs. Hartzell received the wholehearted co-operation on the part of the women who attended this meeting, and they decided to organize a society to carry out this work. Formal organization was completed on July 6, 1880. The framers of the constitution of the new group stated its purpose thus:

"The aim of this Society shall be to enlist and organize the efforts of Christian women in behalf of the needy and destitute women and children of all sections of our country without distinction of race, and to co-operate with the other societies and agencies of the Church in educational and missionary work."<sup>1</sup>

## Educational Work Launched

Reporting to the first annual meeting of the society in October, 1882, Mrs. Rust, who had been elected corresponding secretary, described the areas of need as cabins in the South, and Indian wigwams, and adobe houses, and Mormon settlements, and Chinese quarters. Activities in Sunday

schools and sewing schools were recorded. Of Mrs. L. M. Dunton, who like Mrs. Hartzell, had been active in South Carolina before the organization of the society, Mrs. Rust wrote: "She addresses the people, enforces the laws of health, the sanctity of the family relation, and gives instruction in the practical moralities essential to the Christian home."<sup>2</sup>

This report shows clearly the method by which the women of this society sought to bring relief to the freed people in the South. Here is recorded the expenditure of \$510 for scholarships for girls, Negro as well as white.

"The order of business was then suspended for the purpose of collecting funds for erecting a Cottage Home, to be a department of Clark University, Atlanta, where the pupils would receive instruction in the practical duties of housekeeping.

"Miss Jane Bancroft, Dean of the Woman's College, Evanston, Ill., delegate from the Rock River Conference, but necessarily absent, in a letter of greetings to the Convention offered to be one of forty to give five dollars to this fund."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*First Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Woman's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (Cincinnati: Western Methodist Book Concern Press, 1882), p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 9.



## Girls' Training Opened

Just two simple paragraphs in the first annual meeting minutes are these—an unemotional, matter-of-fact statement of action taken by the Woman's Home Missionary Society. It remained for historians to attach importance to this project and to recount the story behind the action.

President of Clark University, Atlanta, Dr. E. O. Thayer, looked at the training boys were receiving in the Freedmen's Aid Society schools. He felt that girls, too, should have the opportunity to learn how to carry successfully their responsibilities for the home. His enthusiasm was contagious and the faculty and students joined him in a drive to raise funds for such a project. The problems of furnishing Fisk Cottage, named for the donor of a \$500 gift, and providing a superintendent were solved when the responsibility for the home was accepted by the Woman's Home Missionary Society.

Thus the first property of the society was this "Model Home" for Negro girls. Under the supervision of Miss Flora Mitchell the home was opened in 1883. The

six girls in the home were not her only students, for the classes were open to all the girls in the university.

## Two Groups Unite

Four years later, a larger building was erected. It was named "Thayer Home" in honor of the man whose interest had opened the work.

Here the stories of the Woman's Home Missionary Society and of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Pacific Coast merge. With the organization of the Woman's Home Missionary Society, the Pacific Coast group made one more effort to unite its work with that of a similar organization. This time it succeeded. Delegates to the first annual meeting of the national group approved the unification of the two societies. It was not until 1893 that the merger could be completed, however, because the Woman's Home Missionary Society felt that it had insufficient financial backing for the work in the West.

## Of One Blood

God that made the world, . . .  
hath made of one blood all nations  
of men for to dwell on all the face  
of the earth, . . .

—The Acts 17:24-26.

# Negro and White People

## *Seek the Way*



MEMBERS of the newly organized Woman's Home Missionary Society did not spend many hours determining the type of program they would undertake. The work of women such as Mrs. Hartzell in Louisiana and Mrs. Dunton in South Carolina had already indicated the direction in which the new society was to go. And so the chief emphases were personal counseling and education.

Typical of the reports of those early missionaries is this one, dated November 13, 1883, from Miss Cowgill in New Orleans:

" . . . While here my time has principally been given to visiting among the poor, and to holding religious meetings. My places of work have been, in some of the Churches, in homes of the

poor, in the charity hospital, in the prison and jail, among the seamen, in dens of vice and infamy, and on the streets of this city.

"In these places my work has been among both white and colored. . . . Number of religious visits made in the past year, 2,777; meetings held, 191; Bible-readings given, 231; sewing-schools visited, 40; letters written, 223; garments given to the poor, 373; books given to the poor, 150; papers and tracts distributed, 3,123.

## Realistic Philosophy Formed

"Since Mrs. Hartzell's illness I have been in charge of the work in this conference. This year I am organizing some new schools, self-supporting. We now have seven mission schools in this city, and next week I expect to organize two more. I shall have ten Church districts to travel in—nine colored and one white. I cannot organize any day mission school in the white district . . . ; but I shall open a sewing-school, and shall hold religious meetings there. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Second Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Woman's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church (Cincinnati: Western Methodist Book Concern Press, 1884) p. 84.*

Although they were convinced that education was the basic need of those whom they were seeking to help, members of the Woman's Home Missionary Society were realistic in forming the philosophy for such a program. By *education* they meant that women and girls from the lowest economic levels would be taught the "elementary branches of education and the everyday duties of life" to prepare them to make their homes comfortable and happy.<sup>1</sup>

Here was no great crusade to initiate immediately a liberal arts course of study for all. The aim of these women, rather, was to make available that training that would create meaningful and purposeful family life for the underprivileged.

## Local Negroes Aided

The South was not the only part of the country in which the Woman's Society members carried on work among Negroes. Although the national society's projects were located in the South, local groups did not ignore the need of their own neighbors. The Akron auxiliary, for instance, re-

ported helping a Negro church set up a comfortable church home. In addition the members of this auxiliary gave time as teachers and supervisors for the religious education program of the church.<sup>2</sup>

The women were not content with their own program. Their social conscience demanded that the government, too, be concerned about the problems of minority groups. And so they made plans to present these needs to Congress.

The Negro problems, however, were not the first to be considered in this area by the organized home missions society of Methodist women.

At the first annual meeting a committee was named "to take into consideration the interest of the Indian work, and unite with other societies to urge upon Congress the duty of abiding by the treaties, and of making provision for the education of the Indian youth."<sup>3</sup> A year later the committee reporting on Industrial Homes said:

"The educational destitution of the freedmen being great, and no adequate provision being made therefor from any source, it seems to us unworthy of a great Chris-

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 25, 26.

<sup>2</sup>*First Annual Report*, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 14.



tian Government to allow a large and increasingly important class of its citizens to continue in degradation without making suitable appropriation for their education and elevation; therefore,

## Negro Deaconesses Trained

"We recommend that a Committee be appointed for the purpose of conferring with other benevolent and religious associations regarding a petition to Congress, at its present session, which shall ask for adequate appropriations to be made for the common-school and industrial education of the freedmen."<sup>1</sup>

Negroes had served on the staffs of the industrial schools and homes in the South from the beginning. They had been given supervisory responsibilities in district work. But it was not until 1901 that special training for Negro workers is mentioned.

It was in this year that an item for \$1,800 was included in the budget for the Colored Deaconess Training School. A graduate of Gammon Theological Seminary, the Rev. W. H. Riley of Cincinnati, had opened the school in his

home, in November, 1900. During the first year those in the school had made 1,000 calls. Commenting on the appeal made by the minister, the secretary wrote:

"... The school has neither house, home, nor name. His counsel to his race is, 'Let us make it respectable to be colored.' The plea made was, 'Take us on your hearts, and we believe that God will find someone to help us financially.'"<sup>2</sup>

## Negro Deaconesses Consecrated

Although this project has been termed the first deaconess training school organized and promoted by the Negro people themselves, it cannot be said that this was the earliest opportunity for Negro girls to train for deaconess work.

For in this same year officers of the national society were rejoicing over the fact that a graduate Negro deaconess was serving in one of the Atlanta churches.

It was Miss Anna E. Hall to whom the officers referred in their reports. A graduate of the Thayer Home with the class of 1899, she

<sup>1</sup>*Twentieth Annual Report of the General Board of Managers of the Woman's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (Cincinnati: Western Methodist Book Concern Press, 1901), p. 38.

<sup>2</sup>*Second Annual Report*, p. 54.

## Segregation in Protestant Churches

"There are approximately 6,500,000 Protestant Negroes. About 6,000,000 are in separate Negro denominations. Therefore, from the local church through the regional organizations to the national assemblies over 90 per cent of the Negroes are without association in work and worship with Christians of other races except in interdenominational organizations which involve a few of their leaders. The remaining 500,000 Negro Protestants, about 10 per cent, are in predominantly white denominations. Of these, about 95 per cent, judging by the surveys of six denominations, are in segregated congregations and are in association with their white denominational brothers only in national assemblies, and, in some denominations, in regional, state, or more local jurisdictional meetings. The remaining 5 per cent of the 10 per cent in white denominations are members of local churches which are predominantly white. Thus only one-half of one per cent (5 per cent of 10 per cent) of the Negro Protestant Christians of the United States worship regularly in church with fellow Christians of another race. This typical pattern occurs, furthermore, for the most part, in communities where there are only a few Negro families and where, therefore, there are only, on the average, two or three Negro families in the white churches.

"Negro membership is confined to less than 1 per cent of the white churches, usually churches in communities and small towns where but a few Negroes live and have already experienced a high degree of integration by other community institutions, and one might add, communities where it is unsound, to establish a Negro church since Negroes are in such small numbers.

"This pattern appears to be true for other colored minorities . . . a director of home mission work in a great denomination says that his experience leads him to believe that 'generally there is little, if any, discrimination here *though in a community which has a large Mexican population it is quite true that they have their own churches.*' (Italics mine.)

"The same applies to Negroes. In communities where Negroes live in large numbers and form a substantial portion of the population, they have their own churches. In changing neighborhoods where Negroes and whites live in the vicinity of a 'white' church, Negro attendance and membership is almost invariably resisted."

—Frank S. Loescher in *The Protestant Church and the Negro*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1946.

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completed her training at the New England Deaconess Training School and Home in 1901 and was commissioned on Sunday, December 15, 1901, during the annual meeting of the Atlanta Conference. Although other Negro

deaconesses had been commissioned before, she is claimed by the woman's society as the first graduate Negro deaconess to be commissioned. Retired since July, 1932, she told part of her story when she introduced herself at

the second Woman's Division of Christian Service Assembly in Columbus in 1946 with these words: "Deaconess, 25 years in Africa." It was five years after her commissioning that she arrived on the foreign field.

In 1901, too, a nurses' training class was opened at Boylan Home in Florida. This was the beginning of what is today Brewster Hospital.

## Southern Women Take Stand

The year 1901 was an important date for another group of Methodist women. It was in this year that Miss Belle Harris Bennett stood before the Woman's Home Mission Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, of which she was president and announced that the Woman's Board intended to enter a new field of service. As soon as \$5,000 could be raised a girls' hall at Paine Institute in Augusta, Georgia, would be built, she said. To open the campaign, she pledged \$500 in memory of her old nurse, "Mammy Ritter." Miss Mary Helm followed immediately with a pledge of \$100 in memory of her nurse, "Aunt Gillie." When

all the pledges were counted \$1,700 had been given that day.<sup>1</sup>

This was no sudden reformation of thought or conviction on the part of the leaders of this organization. Individual Methodist women for many years had been concerned with their responsibility and obligation to Negroes. As early as 1861, Mrs. E. C. Dowdell, of the Alabama Conference, in a letter to Bishop J. O. Andrew, declared: "The field, of all others, for the care and labor of Southern women is the mission to the colored people, because in the nineteenth century, if there is a people to whom they should be grateful, it is these people."<sup>2</sup>

For ten years before this meeting in St. Louis, Miss Bennett had been working among Negro groups. Describing the beginning of this interest, Mrs. MacDonell wrote:

## Africa Leads to America

"For years she had been burdened because the Southern Methodist Church had not entered the door opened in Africa in the last

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<sup>1</sup>Mrs. R. W. MacDonell, *Belle Harris Bennett, Her Life and Work* (Nashville: Board of Missions, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1928), p. 122.

<sup>2</sup>Mary Noreen Dunn, *Women and Home Missions* (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1936), p. 59.

decade of the nineteenth century at the time the Southern Presbyterian Church began work in the Belgian Congo. Money had not been available and the Church was thus delayed. One day as she agonized in prayer, asking God to open the way for the Church to enter this dark, needy land, he seemed to answer, saying: 'Why not do something for Africa at home in the meantime?' So convinced was she that it was the voice of God that straightway she went to the telephone and called a Negro pastor whom she knew and asked if there was anything she could do for the Negroes in Richmond (Kentucky). His feeling reply was: 'O Miss Belle, my wife and I have been praying every day for nearly a year that you might spare some of your time for us, but you seemed so busy!' ''<sup>1</sup>

And so, the story goes, she began teaching a Sunday-school class the next Sunday.

## Prayer Reverses Decisions

Her reliance on prayer, too, was back of the determined stand she took at the St. Louis meeting in

1901. She had wanted to open work at Paine but she felt that it could not be done successfully until prejudice had been overcome. When the argument—that prejudice would disappear sooner if people fought it—was presented to her, she turned to prayer to find the answer. She and two friends knelt in prayer. When they rose from their knees Miss Bennett said, "We will begin tomorrow morning."<sup>1</sup>

Thus it was that the action of the Board on two previous occasions was reversed and the initiation of work for Negro girls was approved.<sup>2</sup> But obtaining the approval and support of the women at the meeting was one thing, the completion of the fund



## America's Minorities

13,000,000	Negro Americans
5,000,000	Jewish Americans
3,500,000	Mexican or Spanish-speaking Americans
400,000	American Indians
125,000	Japanese Americans
75,000	Chinese Americans
72,000	Alaskan Americans
45,000	Filipino Americans

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>2</sup>*Dunn, Op. cit.*, pp. 59-60.

<sup>1</sup>MacDonell, *Op. cit.*, p. 131.

through gifts from the church-at-large was another thing. And it was not until the end of the fiscal year that the Board knew definitely that it could order the building of the girls' annex. In all this Miss Bennett saw the hand of God:

" . . . Blind eyes have been opened, deaf ears unstopped, and hearts once cold and indifferent have become warm and tender. All prejudice is not yet allayed, but many have said: 'Thank God for the opening of this door!'"<sup>1</sup>

## New Emphasis Noted

At the time that the Southern Methodist women were launching their new work, the Northern Methodist women were finding a new note creeping into their annual presidential addresses. It was the beginning of thought, action, and program that was to find most colorful expression nearly twenty years later in the program of Southern Methodist women.

"We cannot discuss theories and then fail to face facts. We cannot leave this service of fellowship to

those who are specially assigned to racial tasks and then rejoice in their success. They may be our substitutes 'in residence,' but not in influence and co-operation, where our word and act are needed. Remember the sensitiveness and hunger of the human soul when it faces difficulty along racial lines, and never forget the all-inclusiveness of God's family."<sup>2</sup>

These are the words of Mary Haven Thirkield as she in 1926 ended thirteen years as president of the Woman's Home Missionary Society. It was she, too, who said, "Injustice has been done the Negro. . . . Governor Vance, of North Carolina, told the truth in his lecture on the Jews: 'A Jew may cheat. Sometimes he does; but it seems to me that I remember hearing that there once lived a man who always maintained that he had known a Gentile who would do the same thing.'"<sup>3</sup> She did not stop here but went on to condemn the trickery of which Negroes were victims, the penal practices which dealt harshly and unjustly with Negroes, disfranchisement, lynching.

<sup>1</sup>*Sixtieth Annual Report of the Woman's Home Mission Society (Fourth Annual Meeting of the Woman's Board of Home Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South)* (Nashville: Publishing House Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1902), p. 64.

<sup>2</sup>*Forty-fifth Annual Report, The Woman's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (Cincinnati: The Woman's Home Missionary Society Methodist Episcopal Church, 1926), p. 70.

<sup>3</sup>*Twentieth Annual Report*, pp. 100, 101.



## Experience Backs Statements

These are the words of a woman who had identified herself with a movement concerned with an underprivileged group and she had been connected with it in an official capacity since she had served as secretary *pro tem* at the first annual meeting in 1882. But these are also the words of a woman who had seen her father, Bishop Gilbert Haven, ridiculed and hated because of his radicalism in race relations. His election to the episcopacy shocked and frightened even his friends because they knew that he would not give in to custom in the South, where he was stationed. Mrs. Thirkield knew what it meant to believe so deeply that a thing was right that one risks one's life and isolates oneself from others by following that belief.

She and her husband, Bishop Wilbur P. Thirkield, had spent their lives among the Negro people. They, too, had gone into voluntary isolation from white people because they believed in a cause. He had served as head of Gammon Theological Seminary, as president of Howard University, and as general secretary for the Freedmen's Aid Society.

## Stumbling Block

"As long as you have racial discrimination in your country, you are a hindrance to Christianity in my country."

—Dr Eddy Asirvatham, political science professor, Madras University, at the National Methodist Student Conference in Urbana, Illinois, December 28, 1945, to January 1, 1946.

## Southern Girl Chooses Negro Work

It was in 1911 that the Southern Methodist women took another step forward in opening Negro work. At the April meeting in St. Louis, Miss Mary DeBardeleben, whose home was in Alabama, appeared before the women and asked that she be allowed to work among the Negro people.

During the period of intercession for Africa and Negroes in America, she told simply of her wish to dedicate her life to service abroad, of her becoming aware of the needs of the Negro people in her own country and her resultant conviction that she was to work at home rather than abroad.

The significance of this meeting, the first since the home and foreign societies had merged to form the Woman's Missionary Council, is reflected in the request of Mrs. Frank Siler and Miss Bennett that Miss DeBardeleben's salary be

met, not by the regular budget but from money supplied by the women attending the meeting. The home and foreign department secretaries of the South Georgia Conference, too, asked that their conference be granted the privilege of meeting the salary of Miss DeBardeleben, whom they termed their first missionary to the Negro race.

And this is the story behind the opening of Galloway Hall, a "former near-beer salon," as the first social settlement for Negroes in Southern Methodism.

## Teacher's Dream Realized

While Miss DeBardeleben was inaugurating the work in Augusta, Miss Sara Estelle Haskin, who had been her instructor at the Methodist Training School in Nashville, and who had played a large part in her decision to work among Negroes, was seeing a five-year-old dream fulfilled. A pioneer, as teacher and later as editor of literature for the Woman's Missionary Council, in education in race relations, Miss Haskin reported the establishment of a center for Negro work in these words:

"The Religious and Social Serv-

ice Department of the Methodist Training School has since the beginning of the school undertaken some small work for the colored people of Nashville, but with the beginning of this year this special department has taken on new life and vigor. A good, comfortable room was secured for colored people in a Presbyterian church just two blocks from the school and the various activities began in earnest."<sup>1</sup>

Miss Haskin's interest in the Negro people had been intensified by the requests of Mrs. Sallie Sawyer, who, seeing the program of the Wesley House, had asked members of the Council to open work for her people as well. Acting upon requests from the school and from the Tennessee Conference, the Council named a committee to establish a permanent center. In October, 1913, what is now the Haskin-Sawyer Bethlehem House opened in Nashville.

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Traveling almost constantly among the Central Jurisdiction societies is one full-time Negro worker from the Woman's Division. Employed by the Board of Missions and Church Extension as secretaries and assistants are fifteen Negroes, eight Japanese Americans, two Jews, and one American Indian.

<sup>1</sup>*The Missionary Voice*, Vol. III, No. 1, January, 1913, p. 55.

# *Venturing Forth*

## Into New Fields of Service



The achievement of advances in thinking and in program always stands out in the history of any group. But behind these steps forward lies the overshadowed story of patient and continuous work of preparing for the forward movement by those who have seen visions and dreamed dreams.

And so it was with Southern Methodist women. From the time that Miss Bennett stood before the delegates in St. Louis, the leaders of the woman's society had been unrelenting in their program of education and in their stand on Negro work.

In a letter to the Board in 1907, Mrs. John D. Hammond, second vice-president, pled for continued support of Paine College and for help in local communities. Her impassioned request was based

upon the argument that if Christ were to choose a place to work, the Negro community would be the place he would choose because the need there was greatest.

### **Social Service Bureau Set Up**

The date of 1920 is another high point in the history of interracial co-operation, for it was in this year that Southern Methodist women took a bold step forward in openly working for Negro rights and privileges.

But this was not the first venture in this field. It was in 1910 that the Bureau of Social Service was created with Mrs. Hammond as superintendent. Defining the areas in which this bureau would work, Mrs. Archibald Trawick, fourth vice-president, included



"all the problems which touch the daily life of God's children, our brethren."<sup>1</sup>

Although plans had been made to open the program immediately, it was August, 1911, before any printed matter was distributed. In *Our Brother in Black*, one of the first leaflets, Mrs. Hammond reminded Southern Methodist women that they knew practically nothing about the Negro outside his working hours. The kind of home life, the environment in which he grew up, the things that determined the kind of person he became—all these were unknown to the majority of white people.

## Women Condemn Lynching

Declaring that the white people were concerned with the health and moral principles of the Negro who worked in their homes, Mrs. Hammond pled for the laying aside of prejudice, the study of the needs of Negroes, and co-operation with Negro leaders.

Two years later, at the annual meeting of the Council, the committee on social service recom-

mended that efforts be made to help Negroes through supply and educational work in their churches, by agitating for better teachers and sanitary conditions in their schools, by promoting better recreational facilities and community centers, and by insisting on justice before the law.

Southern Methodist women here took their first firm stand against lynching:

"... we as women engaged in Christian social service for the full redemption of our social order do protest in the name of outraged justice against the savagery of lynching.

"... we call upon the law-makers and enforcers of the law and upon all who value justice and righteousness to recognize their duty to the law and to the criminal classes. We appeal to them to arouse public opinion against mob violence and to enforce the law against those who defy it."<sup>2</sup>

## Negro Clubs Organized

And Methodist women went to work, and the next year a small

(Continued on page 26)

<sup>1</sup>First Annual Report, Woman's Missionary Council, pp. 110, 111.

<sup>2</sup>Third Annual Report, Woman's Missionary Council, 1913, pp. 403-405.

## **Serving Inter-cultural Groups**

Arizona Rural Work, Eloy, Arizona  
Blodgett Community House, Hazelton,  
Pennsylvania  
Church of All Nations, Los Angeles, Cali-  
fornia  
Cookson Hills Project, Stilwell, Oklahoma  
Friendly Center, Toledo, Ohio  
Highland Boy Community House, Bing-  
ham Canyon, Utah  
Immigration Center, San Francisco, Cali-  
fornia  
Jesse Lee Home, Seward, Alaska  
L. W. Young Mission, Nome, Alaska  
Leisenring No. 3 Community Center, Dun-  
bar, Pennsylvania  
Maynard-Columbus Hospital, Nome,  
Alaska  
McCrum Community House, Uniontown,  
Pennsylvania  
Methodist Community House, Mt. Vernon,  
Alabama  
Seward General Hospital, Seward, Alaska  
St. Mark's Community Center, New Or-  
leans, Louisiana  
Susannah Wesley Home, Honolulu, Hawaii  
Valley Institute, Pharr, Texas

## **Among Chinese and Koreans**

Chinese and Korean Worker, Los Angeles,  
California  
Gum Moon Residence Hall, San Francisco

## **Among French People**

MacDonell French Mission School and  
Rural Work, Houma, Louisiana

## **Among American Indians**

East Oklahoma Indian Work, Antlers, Ok-  
lahoma  
Indian Mission Co-operative Project,  
Okemah, Oklahoma  
Lapwai Indian Mission, Lapwai, Idaho  
Navajo Methodist Mission School, Farm-  
ington, New Mexico  
Ponca Methodist Mission, Ponca City,  
Oklahoma

# **CENTERS OF**

of the

## **Woman's Division**

Pottawatomie Mission, Mayetta, Kansas  
West Oklahoma Indian Work, Anadarko,  
Oklahoma  
Yuma Methodist Mission, Yuma, Arizona

## **Among Italian People**

Jefferson Park Italian Church, New York  
City  
Langleyville Settlement, Langleyville, Ill-  
inois  
Neighborhood Center, Utica, New York  
North Barre Community Center, Barre  
Vermont  
St. John's Italian Church, San Francisco,  
California

## **Among Japanese**

Japanese Methodist Mission, Spokane,  
Washington  
Japanese Work, New York City  
Tacoma Community House, Tacoma,  
Washington

## **Among Jewish People**

Marcy Center, Chicago, Illinois

## **Among Negroes**

### **Bureau of Educational Institutions**

Allen High School, Asheville, North Car-  
olina  
Bennett College, Greensboro, North Caro-  
lina

# OF WORK

e

## Christian Service

Boylan-Haven School, Jacksonville, Florida  
Browning Home and Mather Academy,  
Camden, South Carolina  
Clark College, Atlanta, Georgia  
Eliza Dee Hall, Austin, Texas  
Paine College, Augusta, Georgia  
Peck Hall, New Orleans, Louisiana  
Rust College, Holly Springs, Mississippi  
Sager-Brown Home and Godman School,  
Baldwin Louisiana  
Scholarships for Women, Gammon Theo-  
logical Seminary, Atlanta, Georgia

### Bureau of Medical Work

Brewster Hospital, Jacksonville, Florida

### Bureau of Social Work

Friendship Homes  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
Detroit, Michigan  
Buffalo, New York  
Los Angeles, California  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Mothers' Memorial Center, Cincinnati,  
Ohio

### Bureau of Town and Country

Mississippi Negro Rural Project, Lampton,  
Mississippi

### Bureau of Urban Work

Bethlehem Centers  
Birmingham, Alabama  
Atlanta, Georgia

Augusta, Georgia  
Jackson, Mississippi  
Charlotte, North Carolina  
Winston-Salem, North Carolina  
Columbia, South Carolina  
Chattanooga, Tennessee  
Memphis, Tennessee  
Nashville, Tennessee  
Ft. Worth, Texas  
Richmond, Virginia  
Campbell Friendship House, Gary, Indiana  
Newberry Avenue Center, Chicago, Illinois

## Among Spanish-speaking Groups

Argentine Neighborhood Center, Kansas  
City, Kansas  
Frances DePauw School, Los Angeles, Cali-  
fornia  
Freeman Clinic and Newark Conference  
Maternity Hospital, El Paso, Texas  
George O. Robinson School and Kinder-  
gartens, Puerto Rico  
Harwood Girls' School, Albuquerque, New  
Mexico  
Holding Institute, Laredo, Texas  
Hospital Internacional, Santo Domingo  
Latin American Community Center, Ozone,  
Texas  
Latin American Social Center, San Marcos,  
Texas  
Methodist Mexican Community Center and  
District Work, Beaumont, Texas  
Mexican Border Work, Calexico, California  
Mexican Community Center, El Paso, Texas  
Mexican Community House, Alpine, Texas  
Mexican Community House, San Antonio,  
Texas  
Mexican Mission, Lyons, Kansas  
Mexican Mission, Wichita, Kansas  
Mexican Pastor, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan  
Rosa Valdez Settlement, Tampa, Florida  
Rose Gregory Houchen Settlement, El  
Paso, Texas  
Spanish Work, Leadville, Colorado  
Wesley Community House, Key West,  
Florida  
Wesley Community House, Robstown,  
Texas  
Whosoever Mission, San Antonio, Texas  
Wolf Settlement, Tampa, Florida

(Continued from page 23)

beginning on the task they set for themselves—a task still incomplete—was reported. Articles on Negro work had been written and societies for Negro women had been organized.

The program for work among Negro women grew in the years after this and plans were made for the organization of "The Colored Women's Community Clubs," under the supervision of the Social Service Committee of the auxiliary. The purposes of the clubs


were the "instruction and mutual helpfulness in the improvement of the Negro home and the uplift and improvement of community life."<sup>1</sup>

All the officers but the director were to be elected from the Negro women themselves. The director, however, was to be a member of the white auxiliary and the program and literature for these clubs were to come from the Woman's Missionary Council.

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<sup>1</sup>*Fifth Annual Report, Woman's Missionary Council, 1915, p. 144.*

## Cementing Advances Made from 1914-1918



"In our own favored land lynchings, riots, rapine, murder, lawlessness in all its forms stalk abroad; . . . We are yet groping through the aftermath of a struggle that drenched all Christendom in blood.

"Through the clouds of race prejudice that have so long darkened the vision of men the Church

is catching again a light from the apocalyptic angel flying in mid-heaven having eternal good tidings to proclaim unto them that dwell upon the earth unto every nation and tribe and tongue and people. In our Southern States there are approximately ten millions of resident Negro American citizens. They have acquired

millions of dollars worth of property, and they and their children have gotten their education, academic and industrial, in our midst; but surest of all, through immediate and friendly contact with the white race, which has two hundred years the advantage of them, in many of the cities, towns, and counties of these States godly men and women of both races are working out plans and policies for race relationships that will bring forth a spirit of Christian brotherhood such as the world has yet never known."<sup>1</sup>

## Interracial Committee Formed

This is a postwar speech made against the background of increasing tension, spilling over into rioting and lynching, during the readjustment period after World War I. Part of Miss Bennett's annual address to the Council in 1920, it prepared the way for the suggestion that the women should restudy their relationship to Negro work. Immediately after Dr. W. W. Alexander, director of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation, had issued his call for a program that would build better

relationships between the races, a motion, asking that the recommendations made by Dr. Alexander be referred to the Committee on Home Educational Institutions and Social Service, was introduced.

Underscoring the significance of this move and safeguarding it, Mrs. Hume R. Steele, mission study and candidate recruiting secretary and one of the leaders in this movement, offered prayer. Immediately after this a call for expression of support was made. The secretary wrote: "The call . . . brought forth a pledge from the body and finally from almost every one present to do her best to bring about a better understanding between races."<sup>2</sup>

Responding to the appeals, the committee resolved:

"That, as Christians and workers in God's kingdom, we accept this challenge to show forth his power to settle racial differences, thereby setting before the whole world an example of the power of Christianity to meet interracial crises everywhere.

"That we set ourselves definitely to the task by the creation of a Commission on Racial Relationships. It shall be the duty of this Commission to study the

<sup>1</sup>*Tenth Annual Report, Woman's Missionary Council*, 1920, pp. 56, 57.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid*, p. 29.



whole question of race relationships, the needs of negro women and children, and methods of co-operation by which better conditions may be brought about. The Commission shall strive to bring our women to a better understanding of the task before them. It shall co-operate with . . . agencies dealing with the race problem."<sup>1</sup>

## Negro Meeting Attended

It was in April that the Commission was created. Within three months Mrs. Luke Johnson, chairman, had her program started. Hearing of the meeting of the National Colored Woman's Clubs for the biennial session at Tuskegee, Alabama, in July, 1920, she requested and gained permission for two commission members to attend.

For these women, committed as they were to the program of the commission, this experience brought the thrill of finding new understanding, deeper and more unshakeable respect for and commitment to their cause. They mingled with eight hundred Negro women from every state in the Union. Among them they

found "artists, poets, musicians, orators, writers, business women, teachers, secretaries, lawyers, and bankers. Many of them were graduates of the so-called Negro colleges of the South, and others were graduates of the colleges and universities of the North—some of them holding degrees from these institutions. Numbers of them had served with us in the dark days of our nation's peril in the work we did at home, and some had served across the seas, . . ."<sup>2</sup>

Working with these Negro women, the delegates discovered that prejudice, suspicion, and distrust of the other race was not a prerogative of the white people alone. Not all the Negro women were sure of the aims and motives of the white delegates.

## Questions Discussed Frankly

Because they realized that in these eight hundred Negro women "was massed a great potential power—a power of womanhood and motherhood—which was mobilizing in a desperate effort to lift the race to a plane where it should walk among the nations of

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 179, 180.

<sup>2</sup>*Eleventh Annual Report, Woman's Missionary Council, 1921*, pp. 153, 154.

the earth—unashamed and unafraid,"<sup>1</sup> the white delegates were determined to lose no time in beginning activities that would build better understanding between the races.

They presented their problems to a group of ten Negro representatives during a day's conference following the meeting. Mrs. Johnson reported that "the whole question of race relationships was approached and discussed upon the platform and principles of Jesus Christ. His presence and guiding spirit were invoked by each woman present. As a consequence there was liberty, and the discussion, which was most painful at times, was held in a frankness of speech and a sympathetic confidence which could have come in no way save in the consciousness of the constraining love of Christ."<sup>2</sup>

The white delegates felt that the only way other members of the Council would gain an understanding that would eradicate prejudice and establish a sound basis for brotherhood was for them to hear the same story they had just heard. With the aid of the Commission on Interracial

Co-operation, the Council commission held a delegated meeting for white women in Memphis in October. To this meeting came conference presidents and social service superintendents from areas in which Negroes lived, general and state officers of women's missionary societies of other denominations, and representatives from the Y.W.C.A. and women's clubs.<sup>3</sup>

## Recommendations Made

Of the leaders at the conference four were Negro women. Their presence did just what the conference planners had hoped. ". . . hearts were melted . . . and there was born that day in the hearts of many a new consecration to God and humanity," Mrs. Johnson said.<sup>4</sup> So vital was the kind of thing they were participating in, the delegates felt, that they were not content to let a meeting represent the only effort to create better understanding. And so there was created an interdenominational Continuation Committee.

From this meeting came the recommendations that domestic

<sup>1</sup>Mrs. Luke Johnson, "Woman's Inter-Racial Conference," *The Missionary Voice*, Vol. X, No. 12 (December, 1920), p. 374.

<sup>4</sup>*Eleventh Annual Meeting*, *Loc. cit.*, p. 154.

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*




## "Physician, Heal Thyself"

The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America hereby renounces the pattern of segregation in race relations as unnecessary and undesirable and a violation of the gospel of love and human brotherhood. Having taken this action, the Federal Council requests its constituent communions to do likewise. As proof of their sincerity in this renunciation they will work for a non-segregated church and a non-segregated society.

In order that the church may remove the validity of the charge which the world makes when it says, "Physician, heal thyself," we urge our constituent communions to correct their own practice of segregation. With this end in view, it is recommended that each communion take steps to ascertain the facts concerning the practice of racial segregation within its own life and work, and formulate a plan of action in the following areas: Membership, fellowship, worship, service, and employment.

—*The Church and Race Relations*—An Official Statement approved by The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America at a special meeting in Columbus, Ohio, March 5-7, 1946.



service be classed as an occupation and that steps be taken to establish better relationships between employer and employee; that day nurseries, free baby clinics and medical information, and playgrounds be provided; that surveys of housing and sanitation

facilities in Negro sections be made with follow-ups on conditions needing attention; that mutual respect for all be the aim of agencies working with children; that a single standard of morals for men and women, black or white, be established; that Negro school facilities and teacher qualification be studied and improved; that Negroes receive fair accommodations and treatment when traveling; that lynchings be made impossible; that Negroes receive justice in courts and in the press.<sup>1</sup>

## Program Outlined

Work of the committee on Interracial Work was the five-fold program of Negro work presented at the next annual meeting of the Council in 1921:

"It shall be the duty of this committee:

"(a) To seek to know the leaders among the Negro women of the community, that a sympathetic basis of co-operation may be established.

"(b) To direct a study of Negro community life in matters of housing, sanitation, neighborhood conditions, and the needs of Negro women and children.

<sup>1</sup>Johnson, *Loc. cit.*, pp. 374, 375.



“(c) To adopt methods of co-operation with other agencies and with Negro women that a constructive program of community betterment may be brought out.

“(d) To lead the auxiliary in a study of Negro achievement in literature, poetry, music, art, and other lines of endeavor, that there may be a sympathetic appreciation of the Negro's contribution to American life in these lines.

“(e) To represent the auxiliary in any local co-operative work that may be undertaken in the community and to have membership on Community Interracial Committees when organized.”<sup>1</sup>

## Literature Published

It was not long before literature to help promote this phase of the Council's program was coming off the press. There were leaflets on the Negro and his working conditions, survey sheets for Negro communities. In addition the Commission issued leaflets on pioneers and leaders in Negro work.

With the inauguration of this bureau and the active interest of Mrs. Johnson, who was in charge

of the woman's section of the Commission for Interracial Co-operation, lead them on, Southern Methodist women undertook a phase of their program which put them more and more before the public. This was their campaign against lynching. One of the most definite pronouncements came in 1923 after the defeat of anti-lynching legislation by Congress. The plan of action called for study of facts regarding lynching, publicizing these facts, attempting to put through legislation in Southern states against lynching, which included penalties against officers and counties allowing lynchings to occur; the demand that lynchers be punished.

## Study Conference Held

*Transfigure*—this is the word with which one of the members of the interracial committee described the effect of the 1920 decisions upon the interracial program of Southern Methodist women. For, she explained, it was from this date that the word *with* replaced the word *for* when referring to Negro work.

Negro and white leaders from this time on have worked together

<sup>1</sup>*Eleventh Annual Report*, p. 194.

in building racial understanding. Their efforts in the early years were concentrated for the most part upon the white groups. Study conferences, called interracial conferences, were held. Here Negro leaders joined with white leaders in an effort to help those upon whom the responsibility for carrying out the program fell gain a better understanding of the Negro, his heritage, history, accomplishments, and needs. From these meetings conference presidents and chairmen of social service committees went back to their homes inspired to launch and successfully carry out anti-lynching and community betterment campaigns.

Although the first conferences were designed primarily to help white women develop their philosophy of race relations, it was not long before an educational program for Negro women was launched. The first training school for Negro women was reported in the summer of 1923. Held at Bethlehem House in Nashville, it drew delegates from eight states. An interracial faculty taught courses in Bible, race relations, social service, child psychology, methods for missionary societies, and for youth groups.

## Northerners Study Problems

But Southern Methodist women were not the only ones concerned over the postwar trends in this country. Between 1918 and 1920 Northern Methodist women were launching their Americanization program and were preparing to observe the three-hundredth anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims.

The migration of Negroes to the North during the war had revealed that there were attitudes in this part of the country which up to this time had remained hidden. Into the reports of plans and the outlines of responsibilities toward minority groups, there came, after the St. Louis riots, a militant condemnation of conditions and attitudes that would allow such events to happen and a firm declaration that the Negro must have the freedom and the liberty for which he had fought and died overseas. The war, too, brought a re-evaluation of attitudes toward the Indian and an insistence that he be granted citizenship rights.

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"There is neither Jew nor Greek,  
for ye are all one in Christ  
Jesus."  
—Gal. 3:28.

## Bennett College Established

It was in 1919 that representatives of this group of Methodist women helped formulate the program for just interracial relationships of the Federal Council of Churches. Thus Methodist women insisted upon the protection of life and property, the support of legislation that would assure life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness to all classes, economic justice for the Negro, the opportunity for the Negro to obtain and hold work, equal pay for equal work, and recreational, traveling, educational, and voting privileges for the Negro.

From time to time since the beginning of the century various schools for the training of Negro deaconesses and missionaries had been opened. From one of these

came the first Negro field worker. Appointed in 1919, she was assigned to work among her own people. It was at the annual meeting in 1919 that Northern Methodist women took the first step toward the establishment of one of their outstanding projects. At this time they voted to set aside a portion of the war fund surplus to open a seminary for Negro girls. The seminary never opened, but in 1926 these funds were pooled with money from the Board of Education to make possible the opening of Bennett College, Greensboro, North Carolina. One of two colleges of its kind in the United States, Bennett is known for its contribution to the community in which it is located as well as to other sections of the country through the leadership of its graduates.

### "This Is Not America"

It happened in a state possessing segregation laws. A young girl from India who had come to spend the next two years in study in this country and a white man were walking to the place where she was to speak. Suddenly their conversation was interrupted when several white men grabbed her companion and demanded to know what he was doing walking with a "nigger."

"My friend" (who was studying in this country), said the girl afterwards, "told me when she introduced me to the section of the country in which she was studying that I would not find the rest of America like that section. 'This,' my friend said, 'is not America.'"

"And I think to myself, 'This, too, is not America.'"

# Negro Work Comes Into Its Own



One of the stipulations for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Woman's Missionary Council was that it should be interracial. It was this ruling that brought about another adventure in the area of race relations for the women of Southern Methodism. It was more than a project for Jubilee year that the committee on social service had in mind when the members proposed the holding of two conferences in 1928 with the women of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church. Out of these conferences was to come the establishment of permanent contacts with the women of Negro churches.<sup>1</sup>

Although it was no easy matter to realize this desire, it was not too difficult, either. For the women discovered that the foun-

dation for making contacts with Negro church women had already been laid for them. And so it was that the first two conferences were held in 1928 in connection with the pastors' schools at Paine College in Augusta, Georgia, and at Mississippi Industrial Institute at Holly Springs. Among those attending the conference were the wives of the ministers who had come to the school with their husbands. But these were not the only women to attend. Members of the two Georgia conferences and of the North Mississippi conference had given money for scholarships for the Negro delegates. Altogether 104 Negro women attended the two conferences led by two Negro and two white instructors. In succeeding years other schools were set up and leaders of other denominations sent delegates to the schools from their women's organizations.

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<sup>1</sup>*Seventeenth Annual Report*, p. 164.

## Negroes Assume Responsibilities

From time to time requests and suggestions for interracial activities were made on the part of Negro women. With the inauguration of these training schools, such suggestions and requests appear more frequently. Officers of the Woman's Missionary Council of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church asked that a leadership training class be conducted for them at a Colored Methodist Episcopal conference. At their suggestion, too, the Woman's Missionary Council of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, invited them to send fraternal delegates to the 1931 annual meeting of the Council.

This was the period in which the work with Negroes came into its own. In its early program, the Southern Methodist women's group had worked entirely for Negroes. But from the time of the Memphis Conference (1920) the emphasis upon work with Negroes had been increased and now Negro and white groups were working together. Mrs. B. W. Lipscomb had been preparing monthly programs for the woman's society of the Negro church.

This was the first time that such programs had appeared in the Negro church paper. With the establishment of the Board of Education of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, the participation of the white women in leadership training and literature preparation became more that of consultants, as Negro leaders took over most of the responsibilities for this work. Together Negro and white women worked to establish state schools for delinquent Negro girls, better educational facilities and instructors, better housing and sanitary conditions for the Negro sections.

## Anti-Lynching Program Expanded

And Negro women were planning activities that would build brotherhood. In one Georgia town, the Negro women invited all mothers to a Mother's Day service and they took both white and Negro mothers to the service if they were unable to get to the church by themselves.

During this time, too, the anti-lynching program was enlarged. Co-operating with the women's director of the Interracial Commission on Co-operation, Southern



Methodist women organized and joined and promoted associations for the prevention of lynching. The program of this group was characterized by boldness in action. Members interviewed law-enforcement officers attempting to get their signatures on a pledge to safeguard prisoners and prevent lynchings. There is the story of the woman, who, on Christmas Day, left the preparation of her Christmas dinner to stay at her telephone calling the members of the association to get them to make contacts with officers who had signed the pledge. Her dinner was late, but a lynching on Christmas Day had been prevented, she commented afterwards. These leaders were aided by the press associations which notified them as soon as they knew a group of mob proportion with the intention of lynching was forming.

It was not only in the area of law-enforcement that Southern Methodist women used their influence. Members of the Commission on Interracial Co-operation suggested that a Negro should be consulted by the members of the Federal Youth Commission. Conference officers immediately urged Miss Josephine Roche, secretary, to seek the ad-

vice of a Negro member and to see that at least one member of state or district National Youth Administration commissions be a Negro. The answer to these letters came in the appointment of Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune, Negro educator and founder of Bethune-Cookman College in Daytona Beach, Florida, to the federal commission.

## Race Is More Than *Black and White*

WHENEVER Methodist women thought or talked about *race* or the *race problem*, they thought or talked about America's largest minority group, the Negro. From the beginning their activities labeled *interracial* have been Negro work.

But this does not mean that Methodist women did not work among peoples of other races and cultures. From the first, organized Methodist women have befriended peoples of all races and cultures within the United States.

It was in 1922 that Methodist women first suggested that the interracial committee enlarge its activities to include the cultivation of friendly relations between different races in this country, but it was not until 1936 that this committee of the Woman's Missionary Council decided it could include the problems of the communities of the foreign-born in its program. A year earlier commission members had studied race prejudice and the Orientals. In 1936, they added the study of the problems of the Mexican people.

## Projects Opened Rapidly

It was the needs of the Chinese people on the Pacific Coast which brought into being the Woman's Society of the Pacific Coast in 1870. The only bureau for work with minority groups in the original set-up of the Woman's Home Missionary Society in 1880 was the Bureau for Indian Work. It was not until five years had passed, however, that the secretary could report a mission had been opened.

The year 1886 marked the opening of numerous projects. The Southern Methodist women began their work in Indian Territory in this year through their efforts

to help the ministers' families in this area.

The Bureau for Alaska was created in this year by the Woman's Home Missionary Society, although it was three years before the chairman could report that a school had been opened. The French work in New Orleans was undertaken at this time, and four years later the superintendent of the bureau reported work among the English, French, Italian, and Scandinavian people in this community. The plea for work among Indians and Spanish-speaking people in New Mexico and Arizona was answered partially in this year with the establishment of a mission in Albuquerque. The records for this year contain, too, the first report of work being done in Chicago. With the shifting of populations, this work, known today as Marcy Center, changed from work among Bohemians to work among Jewish people. Schools and homes for Slovakian girls were maintained until they were no longer needed.

## School for Cubans Started

Among the earliest minority groups to claim the sympathies of Methodist women were the

Cubans in Florida. In 1894 the committee which investigated the proposal that work be opened among these people advised against the starting of the project. The depression had forced the closing of the tobacco factories and many Cubans had returned to their homes, committee members said. Later that year, the plea was renewed and work was opened in Ybor City, a suburb of Tampa, on November 19, 1894. The following month Mrs. Rosa Valdez and Miss Emelina Valdez, Spanish women from Key West, built a home and day school at Cuba

City. One hundred fifty children were enrolled at the time of the report in March, 1895.

Holding Institute in Laredo, Texas, is another monument of the interest and concern of Methodist women for people of other races. Named for Nannie B. Holding, who was one of the earliest missionaries, the school was founded in 1882 by the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Originally under foreign work, it was transferred to the home department of the Woman's Missionary Council in 1913.

## *United* Methodist Women *Build Brotherhood*



THE days of pioneering and adventuring by Methodist women are not over. Methodist women of today, too, dare to dream dreams and see visions.

And that of which they dream and which they see in its perfec-

tion is—a world Christian community—a community in which the ideals of Jesus are practiced as well as accepted in theory.

It is to this end that united Methodist women—united in the sense that women representing



three branches of Methodism are working together, united in the sense that Methodist women regardless of racial, social, or cultural background are working together—have been working since 1940. Ever watching the world at large to fight the spread of hatred and discrimination against minority groups, Methodist women also scrutinize carefully their own church organizations and their actions.

## Meeting Place Changed

The annual meetings of the Woman's Division, the General Missionary Council, the Board of Missions, and the Woman's Division Assembly were scheduled to be held in St. Louis. At the June, 1941, executive committee meeting the Department of Christian Social Relations and Local Church Activities reported that if the meetings were held in that city, segregation would be necessary in housing of the delegates. The department went on to suggest that the Executive Committee should restudy its plans. The Division and Board Meetings for 1942 were held in Cleveland and the Assembly in Columbus. Two years later the department as-

serted that "the church by the nature of its faith is constrained to become more adequately Christian in its own practice. It is deadening to the effort to achieve brotherhood to assume that we have it when it has not yet been achieved. The jurisdictional organization of our church tacitly accepts the principles of segregation. Methodist women have an obligation to stimulate within the church an increasing awareness of the contradiction between our Christian ideals and our plan of organization."<sup>1</sup>

## Policy Changes Urged

Again when the group voted to continue its participation in the Churchman's Washington Seminar in 1946, the department recommended that the Division remind those sponsoring the seminar of the Methodist women's opposition to segregation and urge that action be taken to make it possible for the Division in the future to make its participation in the conference in line with its policy.

The loss of life in Columbia, Tennessee, and Freeport, New York,

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<sup>1</sup>*Fourth Annual Report, Woman's Division of Christian Service (1944), p. 18.*

brought the acuteness of racial tensions to public notice, and the department asked that the Division and individuals through letters request the attorney-general to take steps to safeguard the civil rights of Negroes wherever there is danger of infringement upon these rights. Local women's groups in these areas—and in all areas where tensions are great—were urged to see that a fair investigation was made, and to see that justice was carried out.

These are decisions and policies of united Methodist women. And so it has been since unification. Methodist women together have been seeking to bring their own thoughts and actions as well as those of their communities into line with the Christian principles which they deem to be good and just and true.

Late in 1945 Methodist women declared that the time had come when because of the moving pop-

ulations it would be possible to break down the barriers of race in the church, that Japanese Americans and Negroes, particularly, could be assimilated into established churches.<sup>1</sup>

And the Woman's Division members have something to back them up, too, when they make such statements. For in various parts of the country interracial church experiments are being carried on. In some areas the churches and women deliberately have set up interracial groups. Other churches and woman's societies do not strive to make their membership interracial. The emphasis is upon acknowledging and serving the Master. But in these churches one finds men and women of many minority groups working side by side.

More and more the women are finding that their emphasis in race relations is changing. No longer does one group take a stand to protect the other group. People of all races and classes work together to make their community better—whether it be the local or world-wide community. Thus Methodist women have backed the fight for a permanent Fair Em-

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Fourteen Negro women and Bishop E. W. Kelly, of the Central Jurisdiction, are members of the committees of the Woman's Division of Christian Service. One of these women serves on the administrative committee and three are on the executive committee.

<sup>1</sup>Journal, *Sixth Annual Meeting, Woman's Division of Christian Service* (1945), p. 14.

## The Church's Healing Ministry

A recent study indicates that the racial practices of church-controlled hospitals in this country are little different from such practices in other hospitals. Negro nurses, Negro doctors, Negro patients are excluded from most church-controlled hospitals just as they are from similar institutions secularly controlled. The correction of this situation is complicated by the fact that in many instances these institutions have lost their close organic connection with the churches and have come more and more to accept the standards of the secular community which surrounds them. However, they still maintain a relationship with the churches; in fact, more intimately now than in former years.

—*The Church and Race Relations*—An Official Statement approved by The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America at a special meeting in Columbus, Ohio, March 5-7, 1946.

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ployment Practices Commission. They seek better educational opportunities for all who need them. Because they realize that the family unit is of basic importance to society, they seek to strengthen it. They have through their demobilization workshops sought to attack problems arising from the return of men and women from the war—and this touches peoples whose skins differ in color.

Christian citizenship is a vital part of the program of the Woman's Division. It was early in

1946 that women in Mississippi declared that they could no longer uphold candidates who advocated racial discrimination, and Methodist women as a group asserted that in the future only those candidates who refrained from stirring up racial tensions would receive their support.

It is to the creation of attitudes which lead to such stands as these that Methodist women refer when they speak of interracial activities of united Methodist women today.

# Future Into the Paths



This has been the story of dreamers. Adventurous dreamers who have set out to make their dreams come true. It has been their story and the story of those who followed in their way.

For the most part these pages have told a story of progress. They have told a story of dreams fulfilled. And that is as it should be because the adventures of Methodist women in brotherhood have been successful and the explorers have found rich treasure at the end of their journeys.

But there are still some of the dreams of those first pioneers that are unrealized. And there are dreams that are being dreamed by

Methodist women today. These beckon the daring adventurer.

That mankind may live together as a family should—without distinction of color or cultural background. This is the dream of the past and the present that is yet unrealized. It has been one of the goals since the first society was organized in 1880.

Then the ideal was to create attitudes that would permit Methodist women to work among all racial groups. Today it is stated in these words:

"Methodist history furnishes heartening examples of the incorporation of foreign-language groups into the fellowship of local

churches and annual conferences. Our faith encourages us to look toward a similar incorporation of all groups into a Christian fellowship, where race does not determine the pattern of participation. Only so can The Methodist Church of the future bear its most effective witness for Christ among

the racially diverse populations of our nations and of the world."<sup>1</sup>

This is the challenge of Methodist women today. And what rich treasures are still waiting for adventurous pioneers into the future?

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<sup>1</sup>*Journal, Sixth Annual Meeting*, pp. 14, 15.

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## Segregation and Education and Religion

While nationally the pattern of segregation is too common in our public schools, it is more general in the church in worship and fellowship than in the public school systems. There are large numbers of school systems where racial separation is not practiced and very few churches where the racial separation is not obvious. Furthermore, the segregation pattern in public education seems to be changing more rapidly than in the churches.

There are some exceptions to this among the denominations and in certain interdenominational agencies, notably councils of churches. In spite of these, on the whole our religious bodies are divided on a racial basis, both in national organizations and in local congregations. So complete is the acceptance by the Church of this segregation pattern that fellowship between white and colored Christians in America is frequently awkward and unsatisfactory. While non-white persons are not absolutely barred by rule from so-called white congregations, the self-consciousness which their presence in the congregation and in the fellowship of many local churches arouses is such that it effectively bars them from freedom to worship and fellowship within such congregations.

—*The Church and Race Relations*—An Official Statement approved by The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America at a special meeting in Columbus, Ohio, March 5-7, 1946.

# Methodist and Other Materials

Supplementary to

## Missionary Education Movement Studies

### The Christian and Race

GENERAL—*Atlas of Home Missions*,<sup>2</sup> Free

*Do You Know Builders of a Christian World?*<sup>1</sup> (in the U. S.), 10 cents

*Other Lands and Tongues*,<sup>2</sup> Free

ALASKAN—*A Healing Ministry in the Far North*,<sup>1</sup> Free

*The Medical Missionary at Work in the Land of the Totem Poles*,<sup>1</sup> Free

*The Story of Metlakatla*,<sup>2</sup> Free

AMERICAN INDIAN—*Spires on the Desert*,<sup>1</sup> 5 cents

CHINESE—*A Gift That Blessed a Nation*,<sup>2</sup> Free

*Gum Moon—Open Door—A Residence for Chinese Girls*,<sup>1</sup> Free

CUBAN—*Our Cuban Outpost*,<sup>1</sup> Free

JEWISH—Articles on Marcy Center<sup>3</sup>

MEXICAN—*Friendship Square* (Houchen Settlement, Newark Conference Maternity Hospital, Freeman Clinic),<sup>1</sup> Free

*Methodist Women Along the Mexican Border*,<sup>1</sup> 20 cents

*Together Toward Christian Living* (Harwood School),<sup>1</sup> Free

NEGRO—*Adventure at the South* (Paine College),<sup>2</sup> Free

*Bethlehem Centers*,<sup>1</sup> 10 cents

*Mather's Different*,<sup>1</sup> Free

*Methodism Among Negroes*,<sup>2</sup> Free

*Mothers' Memorial Center*,<sup>1</sup> Free

*Sager-Brown Home and Godman School*,<sup>1</sup> Free

*The Campbell Friendship House*,<sup>1</sup> Free

### Other Materials

PICTURES—Portraits (and biographies) of Outstanding Americans of Negro Origin,<sup>1</sup> \$1.00

*The Negro in American Life*,<sup>4</sup> \$1.00

*The Jew in American Life*,<sup>4</sup> \$1.25

<sup>1</sup>Obtainable at Literature Headquarters, 420 Plum Street, Cincinnati 2, Ohio, and at Distributing Offices, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, New York, and 83 McAllister Street, San Francisco 2, California.

<sup>2</sup>Obtainable at Circulation Department, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, New York.

<sup>3</sup>See your own current and back numbers of *The Methodist Woman* and *World Outlook*. Do not write to the offices of these magazines for this material.

<sup>4</sup>These books may be ordered from The Council Against Intolerance in America, 17 East 42nd Street, New York, New York, or they might be found in your local bookstore. Photographic displays may be borrowed from this same address, free for handling and shipping charges.













Woman's Division of Christian Service  
Board of Missions and Church Extension  
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